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ABSTRACT

A school climate project was initiated in three vocational training schools in Connecticut. Within each of the schools, a school climate team was established with eight-twelve representative administrator, teacher, student, and parent members. This team, with the support of on-going training, conducted a survey of approximately 400 students and the entire school staff in each school using previously developed school climate questionnaires. The team then interpreted the survey results and developed school climate improvement plans based on these data. The three schools are at different stages of the planning effort at present. The school which has progressed the fastest has two sets of plans, one for improving student climate and a second for improving staff climate; and the implementation of some short-term plans has begun. All three schools have decided to continue planning and action phases next fall. Some issues common to these vocational schools have been identified. The completed improvement plans and the capacity to solve school problems by working together in this representative team mode for continued planning were evident outcomes. Appendixes contain school climate definitions and variables, school climate questionnaire, questionnaire profiles, and school climate improvement plans. (Author/KC)

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MEASURING AND IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE

FINAL REPORT

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ABSTRACT

A school climate project was initiated in three vocational training schools in Connecticut. Within each of the schools, a school climate team was established with representative administrator, teacher, student and parent members. This team with the support of on-going training, conducted a survey of approximately 400 students and the entire school staff in each school using previously developed school climate questionnaires. The team then interpreted the survey results and developed school climate improvement plans based on these data. The three schools are at different stages of the planning effort at present. The school which has progressed the fastest, has two sets of plans; one for improving student climate and a second for improving staff climate, and the implementation of some short term plans has begun. All three schools have decided to continue planning and action phases next fall. Some issues common to these vocational schools have been identified. The completed improvement plans and the capacity to solve school problems by working together in this representative team mode for continued planning were evident outcomes.

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I. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the project were to measure and then to improve the school climate in three volunteer vocational training schools in Connecticut School climate is defined in this project as "feelings and opinions about various aspects of the school and how it operates, as perceived by school members." From this definition, 13 variables have been derived and questionnaires developed in a previous study.* The 13 variables and their definitions appear as Appendix A, 13. In Appendix B, 14, the questions from the questionnaire are presented by variable and domain. The means, the variance, and the correlations for the original population which served to develop norms are also shown. The order of questions as they appear, was rearranged on the questionnaires administered to students.

The objectives of the project were based on the central feature of the design, which was to establish an internal school team to manage the school survey and planning effort.

The school climate team, recruited by the school administrator, was to include representatives from all levels of the school community: students from several grade levels, academic and shop teachers, parents, and administrators. The team, after appropriate training in the conceptual framework of the school climate approach, reviewed the questionnaires and selected questions which would identify student characteristics, such as sex, grade, race, marks, and attendance. In this way, the findings could be related to different subgroups' perceptions of school climate, and the planning would be appropriate to the particular school. In addition, a parallel questionnaire for staff was given if the team chose that option (and all three school teams did), so that planning for improvement of

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* The study referred to involved over 2000 students in 24 high schools and is described in "School Climate Handbook, Massachusettes Educational Assessment Program, 1976-1977."

"teacher climate" could be based on those results. The effective functioning of this internal team was crucial to the work, which operated in sequential stages throughout the year.

Objectives:

1. To form and train a school climate improvement team in each of three project schools; each team to consist of 8-12 teacher, student, administrator, and parent representatives, and to be trained in school climate concepts and use of measuring instruments and procedures.

2. To train the school climate improvement teams to select samples and to administer the school climate questionnaires in their schools.

3. To train and assist the school climate improvement teams to interpret their school climate survey results, and to prepare a written school climate improvement plan.

4. To train and assist the school climate improvement teams in beginning to implement their school climate improvement plans.

5. To disseminate the results of the project and future recommendations to the remaining Connecticut vocational schools, the Connecticut Department of Education, and other audiences.

II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The three schools recruited teams of 8-12 members, composed of administrators, teachers, students and parents from the school community. By the end of the first full day of training, these teams understood the concepts of school climate in terms of the thirteen climate variables as they would apply in their own schools. They reviewed the questionnaire items, and made decisions about items to add to questionnaires which would be particularly suited to the needs in their schools. Sampling plans were developed and the logistics for a standardized questionnaire administration were completed. To prepare the participants for the survey, teacher and administrator team members conducted staff orientation; student members made presentations to the student body and parent and administrator members informed parents about the proposed plans.

By the end of the following month, questionnaires had been administered to approximately 400 students and the full staff in each of the three schools.

At the second training day, TDR presented the survey results, tabulated and analyzed for the school teams to interpret. The school teams began the generation of action plans based on the empirical data in the results.

School teams then met regularly, either in subgroups to focus on student climate and on teacher climate, or grouped by individual variable or plan, and also as a full team in order to refine and integrate these plans.

On the third training day, the written plans were reviewed, and the teams prepared for presentations of these plans in open hearings for the school communities. Team members were responsible for arrangements including hand-outs to insure that information was communicated, and that the reactions from school members were recorded. Then the teams revised these plans based on the reactions

from the hearings; they translated the now ratified plans into implementation strategies. Team members were introduced to planned change methodology to acquaint them with the theoretical background which would help them manage the implementation phases, and continue the cycle of planning and action.

The three schools worked within this general structure but there was variation among them in the rate of progress. One school (called "School C" in this report) was delayed initially because of problems recruiting parent team members. Progress was slowed and School C has now reached the stage where plans are drafted but open hearings will not be held until fall. In all three schools there were constraints due to demands on time, space for meeting and resources to achieve each stage of the project. In school A where the Director was an active member of the team, these constraints were dealt with most efficiently and this was reflected in their more rapid progress. School A completed and revised plans after open hearings, recruited committees to manage each improvement effort. These committees have met, and they have begun implementing some of the plans this year.

There were some striking commonalities among the schools in the needs and problems identified and in the resultant plans, which is probably due to the nature of education, and vocational education in particular. However, because the process is dependent on the team itself interpreting, integrating, developing and directing the plans based on the individual school's needs as demonstrated in survey results, the outcomes were unique to each school, as can be seen in the following section.

III. RESULTS

A. School Climate Survey

The school climate results were presented to the school climate teams on graphs and tables. On the graphs (see samples, pp. 22-27), variables are converted into normalized measures with a mean score as described in the previous section. The level of response (positive or negative) and the discrepancies between subgroup's responses are clearly shown so that the team can identify the stronger and weaker variables in the perceptions of school climate by different school members.

After the survey results were analyzed, a package of graphs and tables was presented to each team member which included a graphic illustration of the role groups and the subgroups by each variable, such as male, female. For example, on p. 22 the responses by students and by staff are displayed together for School A. When the School A teams studied this graph, they noted that "Expressiveness" was rated by the staff at the mean level, but by the students as far below the mean. Student team members explained that in this school there is little value placed on creative effort. A parent member said that it was not surprising to find Expressiveness low in student ratings, because in a vocational school task orientation is obviously more important. This comment sparked vehement reactions from student members who felt that the need for creative and interpersonal abilities was very important to vocational students. The teachers on the team agreed, and team members subsequently examined their own goals and assumptions about the purpose of education and the basic philosophy of vocational schools.

Other data showed how subgroups of students rated this variable. In School A, those students who were least involved with school activities rated

Expressiveness lowest. The School A team also was disturbed by the low ratings on Options by both staff and students. The school has clubs, but students said that these are poorly attended. Other data indicated that the majority of students work after school when clubs were offered. They noted that students who participated in school activities were more positive on both variables--Options and Expressiveness. Students and staff recognized in the additional data that students who came on buses (the majority) arrived just in time for their first class, and left immediately after the last class. The team began to explore the possibility of changing the school schedule to allow for an elective activity period within the school day. They also felt that adjusting the bus schedule would be required. The plans which evolved from these discussions are described on pages 28-41. The original set of plans (p. 30) were presented to the whole student body and to the entire staff for reactions, and revised on that basis. They were then translated onto a time schedule for implementation. At that point, assisted by TDR, the team made plans to recruit other school members to form committees who would help with the details of implementation, while the original team would serve as a core group linking these committees together for better coordination of a total school improvement plan.

In School B, the team focused on the low ratings of Community (see graph, p. 23). They felt that the sense of community in a school is basic, and they discussed the reasons for low ratings by both staff and students. Students in the school are from different towns, and it is difficult to identify with the school community. When subgroups by shop were studied, the team noted that some shop groups were higher than others, and students and teachers agreed that shops were somewhat divisive within the school community. The team decided that more school-wide activities were needed. They also felt that communications within

the school were lacking and contributed to a low level of school pride. Student team members indicated that there was a serious lack of confidence in the effectiveness of student organizations and also a need for more faculty involvement in student activities.

Some of these same reasons explained the low student ratings of Accessibility and Receptivity (p. 39). On this variable, the team was struck by the discrepancy: staff ratings were above the mean, while student ratings were lower than those on any other variable. Students varied in other data, by grade level, aspirations, and marks, with male students in upper grades with lower marks and aspirations, giving lower ratings. Teacher team members said that they thought that staff was both accessible and receptive, but students explained the lack of time or place for approaching teachers and a perception that many teachers had little interest in their problems or concerns. Students showed strong agreement with such statements as, "People pay little attention to what students say around here," and, "People here make you feel that you're wasting time when you ask for help." The team was disturbed by the serious implications of these student feelings, but were careful to keep in mind that these are student perceptions, whether or not it is indeed fact.

However, the team began its planning to meet the needs identified by the data on both of these variables. The committee report (pp. 35-40) describes these plans.

In School C, three variables were selected, all of which received discrepant ratings by staff and students (see p. 41). On Accessibility and Receptivity, and on Equal Treatment, student responses were more negative than staff's, but on Order, the staff ratings were lower than students'. Further data (p. 27) showed that eleventh graders were significantly more negative than students in other grades. Responses to an item asking how

much their families encouraged them in their school work showed that perceived parental attitudes were significantly and positively related to student attitudes toward the school climate (p. 26). The importance of the parent community was dramatically illustrated. Team members found this an unexpected finding, but one that should be carefully considered in their planning. They also noted that perhaps special programs should be developed for eleventh graders. The discussion at School C was productive and many ideas were generated, but there was no time to record the ideas, so that further translation into plans was delayed until fall.

The diversity of perspectives on these teams allowed some basic issues to emerge, and members worked toward a better understanding of the school as an organization. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents gained insight about each others' responsibilities. The data, and more specifically the team members' interpretations of the data, allowed for a wide range of ideas to be expressed.

As the survey results were explored within each team, problems, frustrations, and issues were considered before the team members gradually realized that they now have the evidence and the opportunity to address these concerns.

B. Improvement Plans

Plans were developed in stages. Initial ideas grew directly from the data interpretation, but as issues were raised, the teams realized they had to focus on a few variables as a beginning. The representativeness of the team provided the realistic context to insure that the plans were feasible.

The three sets of plans are presented in the Appendix D, pp. 28-41. School A developed two sets of plans: Student Climate Improvement and Staff Climate Improvement. From these first drafts, after the open hearings, the team at School A translated these plans onto an implementation schedule with target groups and the projected target completion dates established. The staff climate implementation committee did not specify a time schedule because the plan they outlined was to take place the first week of school; however, they did present a detailed list of activities. At School A, there was a second staff climate committee which developed a detailed plan for in-service training sessions on "Teacher-Stress".

At School B, the school climate team decided to address the student climate first and to focus on two variables. It is interesting to note that one plan, to provide an activity period within the school day, is similar to a plan at School A. Other plans were quite different at the two schools. The president of the student council was a member of the School B team, and stressed the role that the student organization could play in the continuing effort. At School A, an officer of the eleventh grade class, surveyed his class members to see what their interests were regarding clubs and activities. The students also intend to survey staff members about their willingness to sponsor these activities.

At School C, variables were selected for both student and staff climate improvement. Ideas were discussed, but written plans have not been completed. However, the team has decided to remain as a team with additional members added, to begin next fall with preparation for open hearings.

It can be seen that the plans vary in complexity. For example, at School A, some ideas (e.g., individualized scheduling) require extensive time and effort before they are actualized, while some schedule changes seemed feasible immediately. It can also be noted that the original drafts are often stated in broad recommendations and they must be refined before implementation stages.

Viewing these three sets of "plans" it is clear that the three schools are at different stages; however, the direction and intent of school improvement are similar. It is equally clear that these three teams have identified significant elements in their school climates which the team believes are alterable. They have taken steps toward organizational change and they feel empowered to accomplish these improvements.

C. Continuing Improvement Capacity

The most significant outcome of the school climate project is the team itself and the process it experienced. Members of these teams representing each role in a school community, were able to discuss issues central to the group they represented yet learn and understand differing view points. A guidance counselor at one school commented: "This is the first time in all my years that students and staff sat down together on an equal par and talked about real issues and philosophy."

At times during team meetings, administrators or staff were compelled to say that an idea was not possible, but they explained why. Students were surprised to learn about limitations but accepting when the reasons were given. Staff members, too, were sometimes unaware of student assumptions and understandings. Students were surprised that the staff was surprised. The team members developed mutual respect and trust as they gradually adopted a position of advocacy about their growing plans.

Students who were quiet and cautious, began to participate actively. The teams became effective working groups to varying degrees in these different settings.

All three schools decided to continue the present team membership as a core group next year. Although others would be recruited for action stages, this team was convinced that improvement planning and changes are possible and that as a group they were capable of effecting reasonable change. They learned to recognize and anticipate the kinds of resistance they would encounter. Most of all, their commitment to the school as an organization in which they each had a stake, increased as they accepted their own responsibility for the kind of place it could be. The level of problem solving ability varied among team members and among the schools, but in every case, the individual team member's decision to continue on the team, indicated that the team might well be a new part of each of these institutions.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND CONTINUING ISSUES

This project reveals some findings basic to these vocational schools. The organizational structure relating the schools directly to the State Education Department has both advantages and disadvantages. The strength of clear lines of authority and uniform and explicit requirements are advantages; the demands for meeting differing individual school needs, and the desire of school staff and students for school-based autonomy is sometimes frustrated. The schools, while under state authority, are composed of a student population from several towns so that a sense of school community must be consciously nurtured. Students are emotionally bound to local towns, while the school administration has little or no relationship to these towns. Students contrasted the "school spirit" in local schools to a lack of this feeling in vocational schools. Enlisting parent interest and support is also difficult, and as the survey results clearly show, this positive parent attitude is vital to positive student attitudes. Each of these teams focused on this element in some way. School B proposes publicity and a school newspaper, as well as more school-wide activities in an attempt to encourage a school identity and the recognition of this identity by the participant towns. School A hopes to recruit parents to sponsor some of the clubs they propose. This connection to local communities to contribute to the identity of the school itself as a community will be a continuing challenge to these schools.

Another underlying issue was apparent. There is little time or space for planning in these schools. Few staff members have specific planning time, and little flexibility for school-wide staff is built in for overall planning together. Even space is at a premium, and finding the combination of time and space was difficult for all of these schools. This planning experience made it evident that school-wide planning is important and productive.

The nature of the vocational school experience has traditionally limited

student choices in the curriculum after the student's initial vocational selection. These teams discovered ways to reintroduce a sense of option which apparently was important for the students. Having once made his/her shop choice, a student wanted increased opportunities for self-selected directions and some control over his day-by-day activities. The philosophy of vocational education need not be translated as a narrow and self-limiting human experience. Guidance personnel noted recent trends towards post-high school formal training among vocational students, and interpreted this to mean that today's students seek richer fuller lives. Broadened opportunities could be available at this formative stage and all three of these teams searched for ways to allow more choices and increased exposure to diverse substance for these students.

In conclusion, this project was viewed by most participants as a healthy beginning in establishing both some concrete positive changes, and the capacity for a continuing productive planning mode. It will take leadership and encouragement to persist in overcoming the natural constraints required to maintain this momentum in a long term context.

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL CLIMATE DEFINITIONS AND VARIABLES

"School climate refers to feelings and opinions about various aspects of the school and how it operates, as perceived by school members."

A. Relationships: Relationships involve feelings and opinions about how students, teachers, administrators, and parents get along with and support one another. Relationships include the following variables:

1. Community: Perceptions of the level of friendship and mutual support school members feel toward each other.
2. Accessibility and Receptivity: Perceptions of the availability and openness of school members to conversation and assistance about concerns.
3. Involvement: Perceptions of the extent of school members' interest and participation in learning, social, and other school activities.
4. Equal Treatment: Perceptions of the uniformity of members' opportunities and treatment in the school.
5. Groupings: Perceptions of the extent to which group membership is a positive or negative experience in the school.

B. Personal Development: Personal development involves feelings and opinions about the directions and conditions of learning in the school. Personal development includes the following variables:

1. Learning Orientation: Perceptions of extent for which learning and acquiring academic, vocational, and interpersonal skills are emphasized in the school.
2. Expressiveness: Perceptions of the extent of originality, and open expression of ideas and feelings among school members.
3. Goal Direction: Perceptions of the extent to which school members understand and accept what they are expected to accomplish, and provides a framework for focusing their efforts.
4. Challenge: Perceptions of the level of difficulty of school members' goals and tasks, and the pace of effort required.

C. Organization: Organization involves feelings and opinions about the way the school operates. Organization involves the following variables:

1. Dealing With Problems: Perceptions of the extent of identifying, analyzing, and resolving school problems when they arise.
2. Order: Perceptions of the extent to which school rules reflect established legal procedures, and are accepted by school members to maintain favorable learning conditions.
3. Options: Perceptions of the extent of choices available to school members regarding goals, courses, levels of challenge, and social opportunities, for example.
4. Influence Distribution: Perceptions of the extent to which school members contribute to decisions regarding rules, procedures, and options, for example.

TDR Associates, Inc., 1978

APPENDIX B

Domain, Variable, and Item Statistics for the 1977 Student School Climate Questionnaire

SCHOOL CLIMATE DOMAIN ONE -- RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships involve feelings and opinions about how students, teachers, administrators and parents get along with and support one another. Relationships include the following variables and questionnaire items:

A. COMMUNITY: Perceptions of the level of friendship and mutual support school members feel toward each other.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE*	ITEM/ DOMAIN**		
3.24	.43	.44	.24	1.	Students in this school know most of the members of their daily classes by their first names.
2.41	.74	.53	.42	5.	Students would rather be in this school than in any other school.
2.61	.90	.63	.51	27.	The students here have a lot of school spirit.
2.51	.65	.59	.48	40.	People in this school only look out for themselves.
2.38	.57	.52	.45	53.	Students often find something nice to say about each other's accomplishments.
2.74	.47	.58	.51	66.	Students feel they can get help from others here when they need it.
2.79	.76	.60	.46	78.	If I walked around school all day feeling bad about something, nobody would even notice.

*Correlation of item with variable.
**Correlation of item with domain.

D. EQUAL TREATMENT: Perceptions of the uniformity of school members' opportunities and treatment in the school.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.74	.45	.56	.46	17.	Students get an equal chance to speak in their classes.
2.69	.73	.60	.46	30.	Students here get the marks they earn.
1.73	.54	.54	.42	43.	Some people in this school are favored more than others.
3.24	.38	.39	.30	56.	The students in this school can learn if they work hard.
2.93	.68	.53	.40	69.	Only the smarter students ever get the best teachers.
2.47	.61	.67	.58	81.	Students in this school are treated fairly.
2.00	.70	.45	.31	82.	Certain groups of students in this school are looked down on.

E. GROUPINGS: Perceptions of the extent to which group membership is a positive or negative experience in the school.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.47	.81	.52	.14	4.	You feel left out if you're not part o a group in this school.
2.69	.81	.64	.40	14.	You need to be in a group to be liked in this school.
2.29	.60	.39	.26	18.	In many classes, a small group of students disrupt learning.
2.74	.50	.45	.18	31.	Once you get into a social group, it's hard to get out.
3.01	.69	.52	.38	35.	There are too many fights between groups in this school.
1.90	.68	.59	.42	44.	People here tend to label you by the group you are in.
2.55	.38	.54	.40	57.	It's easy to belong to several groups in this school.

B. ACCESSIBILITY AND RECEPTIVITY: Perceptions of the availability and openness of school members to conversation and assistance about concerns.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.43	.53	.47	.37	2.	People pay little attention to what students say around here.
3.05	.55	.61	.42	15.	Most teachers in this school will see a student who needs help.
2.56	.70	.64	.53	28.	You can get good adivce in this school when you need it.
3.19	.46	.59	.45	41.	Most teachers are willing to have you come to them for extra help.
2.80	.66	.64	.53	54.	People here make you feel that you're wasting time when you ask for help.
1.96	.81	.49	.46	67.	Students seldom talk to the principal unless they're in trouble.
2.66	.56	.63	.56	79.	Most people here will take enough time to listen.

C. INVOLVEMENT: Perceptions of the extent of school member's interest and participation in learning, social, and other school activities.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.29	.67	.56	.43	3.	On most days I look forward to my classes.
2.36	.54	.59	.48	16.	Most students in my classes do a lot of day dreaming.
2.19	.52	.42	.25	29.	Many students don't even try to take part in class discussions.
2.45	.88	.57	.52	42.	Activities like clubs and dances in this school are usually lively and interesting.
2.76	.88	.59	.44	55.	Most students here would be upset if they came to school and found a lot of equipment destroyed.
2.07	.68	.61	.47	68.	Many students here would prefer to avoid school.
2.29	.62	.50	.36	80.	Few students who are able to stay after school ever do.

SCHOOL CLIMATE DOMAIN TWO -- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal development involves feelings and opinions about the directions and conditions of learning in the school. Personal development includes the following variables and questionnaire items:

A. LEARNING ORIENTATION: Perceptions of the extent to which learning and acquiring academic, vocational, and interpersonal skills are emphasized in the school.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.18	.81	.51	.39	11.	Learning is more important than marks in this school.
2.74	.72	.70	.60	19.	Students here learn many things that will be useful to them after they leave high school.
2.58	.50	.65	.63	32.	When you come to this school you learn a l
1.88	.63	.41	.32	45.	Students here care more about good marks than what they learn.
2.56	.65	.70	.61	58.	This school does well in preparing student for a job.
2.51	.71	.55	.45	70.	This school teaches you how to deal with all kinds of people.
2.76	.58	.63	.58	91.	This school does well in preparing student for college.

B. EXPRESSIVENESS: Perceptions of the extent of originality, and open expression of ideas and feelings among school members.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.58	.60	.62	.46	7.	Students are encouraged to discuss their own ideas freely in classes.
2.77	.69	.55	.37	20.	People in this school are afraid to speak
2.63	.54	.53	.41	33.	Students here rarely express their own id
2.59	.62	.56	.44	46.	Students can be themselves in this school.
2.71	.57	.64	.52	59.	Students are encouraged to express their own feelings freely in classroom discussi
2.31	.66	.60	.60	71.	Learning is enjoyable in this school.
2.77	.57	.50	.40	83.	Creative work like art is respected here.

C. GOAL DIRECTION: Perceptions of the extent to which school members understand and accept what they are expected to accomplish, and provides a framework for focusing their efforts.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.52	.66	.56	.45	8.	No one really knows the goals of this school.
2.77	.39	.49	.38	21.	Most students know what they're expected to learn in their classes.
2.98	.55	.66	.56	34.	You can find out how to prepare for jobs or college in this school.
2.65	.50	.74	.66	47.	This school helps students to set goals for themselves.
2.46	.56	.70	.65	60.	Most students feel that this school helps them meet their own goals.
2.75	.37	.55	.47	72.	Most students feel they can learn what this school tries to teach them.
2.60	.52	.44	.40	84.	Students often work against what this school is trying to do.

D. CHALLENGE: Perceptions of the level of difficulty of school members' goals and tasks, and the pace of effort required.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
3.09	.42	.36	.14	9.	Most students find their classes too easy.
2.40	.67	.67	.49	22.	Students here do as little as they have to.
2.86	.62	.46	.18	48.	This school doesn't demand enough from the students.
1.99	.60	.58	.36	61.	Students in this school try to get the easy teachers and avoid the tough ones.
2.81	.61	.57	.52	73.	No one in this school thinks the work is very important.
2.35	.60	.53	.35	85.	Most students work hard in this school only before tests are given.
2.30	.59	.56	.49	90.	Most people here work to their best abilities.

SCHOOL CLIMATE DOMAIN THREE -- ORGANIZATION

Organization involves feelings and opinions about the way the school operates. Organization involves the following variables and questionnaire ite

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A. DEALING WITH PROBLEMS: Perceptions of the extent of identifying, analyzin and resolving school problems when they arise.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.67	.66	.51	.31	6.	People here usually avoid admitting t problems exist.
2.69	.65	.52	.33	10.	Students here talk openly about schoo problems.
2.83	.66	.59	.57	24.	In this school, nothing is ever done about problems.
2.52	.54	.54	.41	36.	People seek each others' ideas about solving school problems.
2.30	.62	.56	.52	49.	The same old problems are never solve in this school.
2.44	.55	.56	.52	62.	Problems are usually discussed before action is taken.
3.04	.60	.37	.23	74.	When problems arise in this school, people quickly know about them.

B. ORDER: Perceptions of the extent to which school rules reflect establishe legal procedures, and are accepted by school members to maintain favorable learning conditions.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.90	.59	.51	.31	23.	Students know exactly what will happ when they break a rule.
2.73	.55	.27	12	37.	The students in this school are too
2.42	.88	.53	.31	50.	School rules are broken so often the considered a joke.
2.45	.75	.58	.59	63.	The school rules are fair and reason
2.56	.88	.68	.58	75.	School rules and procedures apply to everyone equally.
2.63	.58	.65	.45	86.	Everyone understands the rules in th school.
2.66	.53	.64	.54	88.	Students know their rights in this s

C. OPTIONS: Perceptions of the extent of choices available to school members regarding goals, courses, levels of challenge, and social opportunities, for example.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
3.05	.77	.63	.44	12.	Students don't have much choice about which courses they can take.
2.76	.80	.65	.51	25.	Students here can be trained to qualify for many different kinds of jobs.
2.62	.65	.37	.23	38.	The same students always end up together in the same classes.
2.73	.62	.69	.56	51.	This school has something to offer to students with many different interests.
3.03	.48	.55	.49	76.	Students can choose to belong to many clubs and activities in this school.
3.09	.46	.48	.31	86.	Students here can choose harder or easier courses.
3.05	.62	.50	.38	89.	Students here have very few chances to make new friends.

D. INFLUENCE DISTRIBUTION: Perceptions of the extent to which school members contribute to decisions regarding rules, procedures, and options, for example.

MEAN	VARIANCE	ITEM/ VARIABLE	ITEM/ DOMAIN		
2.07	.72	.62	.48	13.	Students help make the rules in this school.
1.94	.78	.48	.29	26.	Students need permission to do almost anything in this school.
2.16	.62	.52	.39	39.	Students are usually asked about decisions before they are made.
2.23	.62	.59	.49	52.	Students help plan class activities.
2.64	.73	.60	.52	65.	Students have little say in planning school activities.
2.61	.50	.62	.55	77.	Students are able to ask about decisions that are made.
2.62	.74	.63	.56	87.	Student government has no power in this school.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE PROFILE

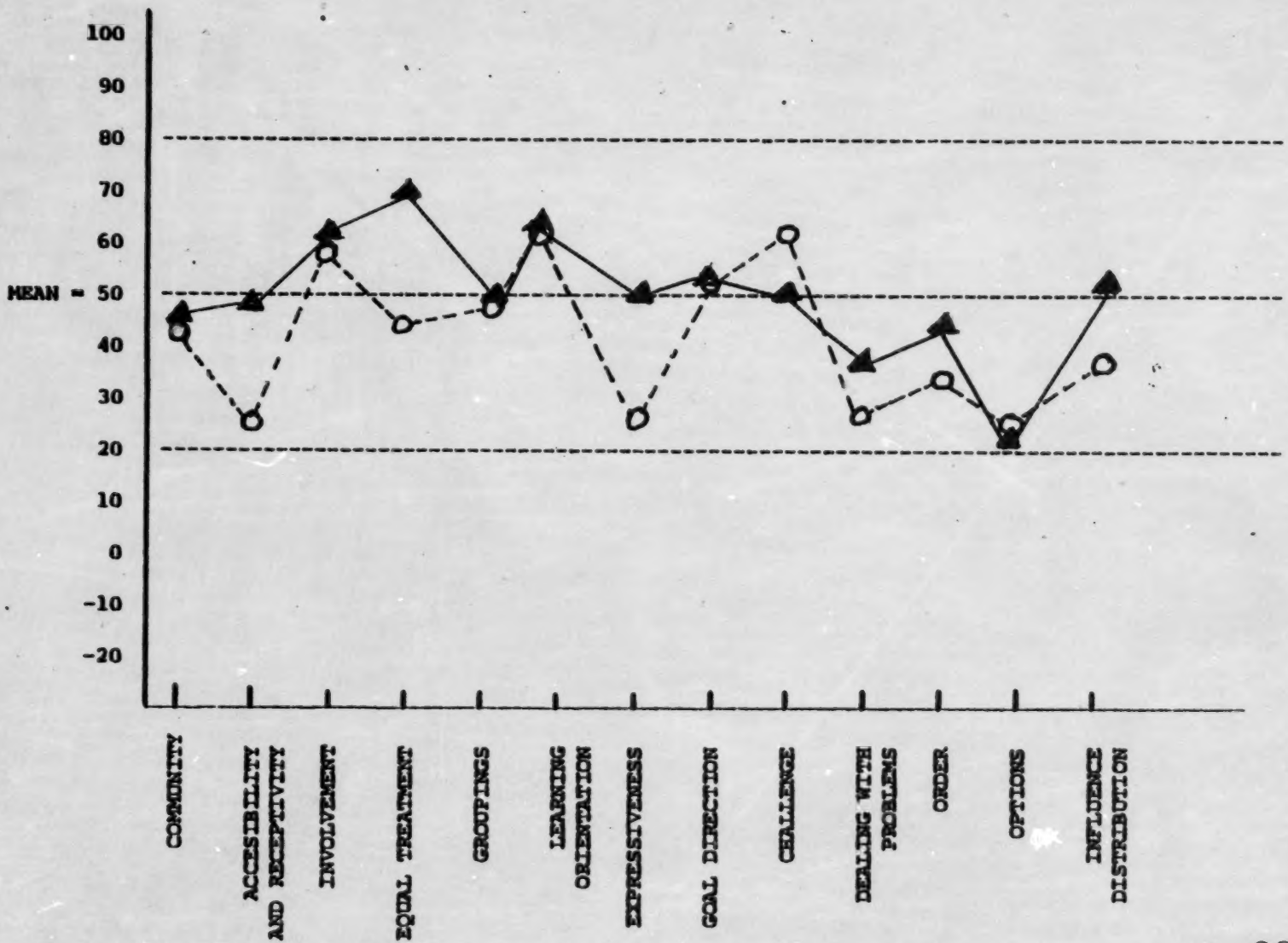
GRAPH I

School Climate: Students on Student Climate
Staff on Student Climate

SCHOOL: SCHOOL A

KEY: Staff on Students (n=44) ▲—▲

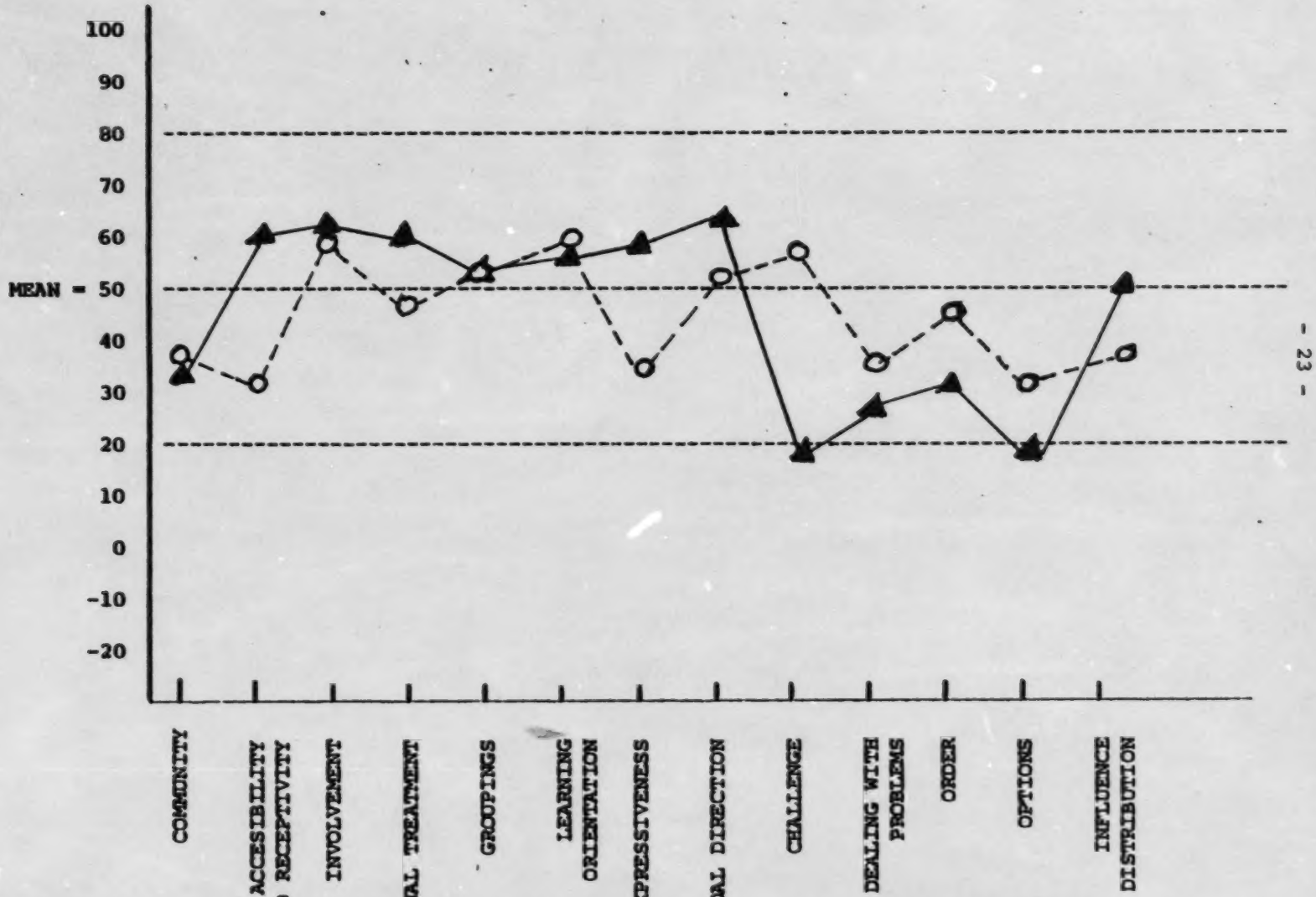
Students on Students (n=445) O---O



School Climate: Students on Student Climate
Staff on Student Climate

SCHOOL: SCHOOL B

KEY: Staff Ratings (n=63)
Student Ratings (n=311)



QUESTIONNAIRE PROFILE

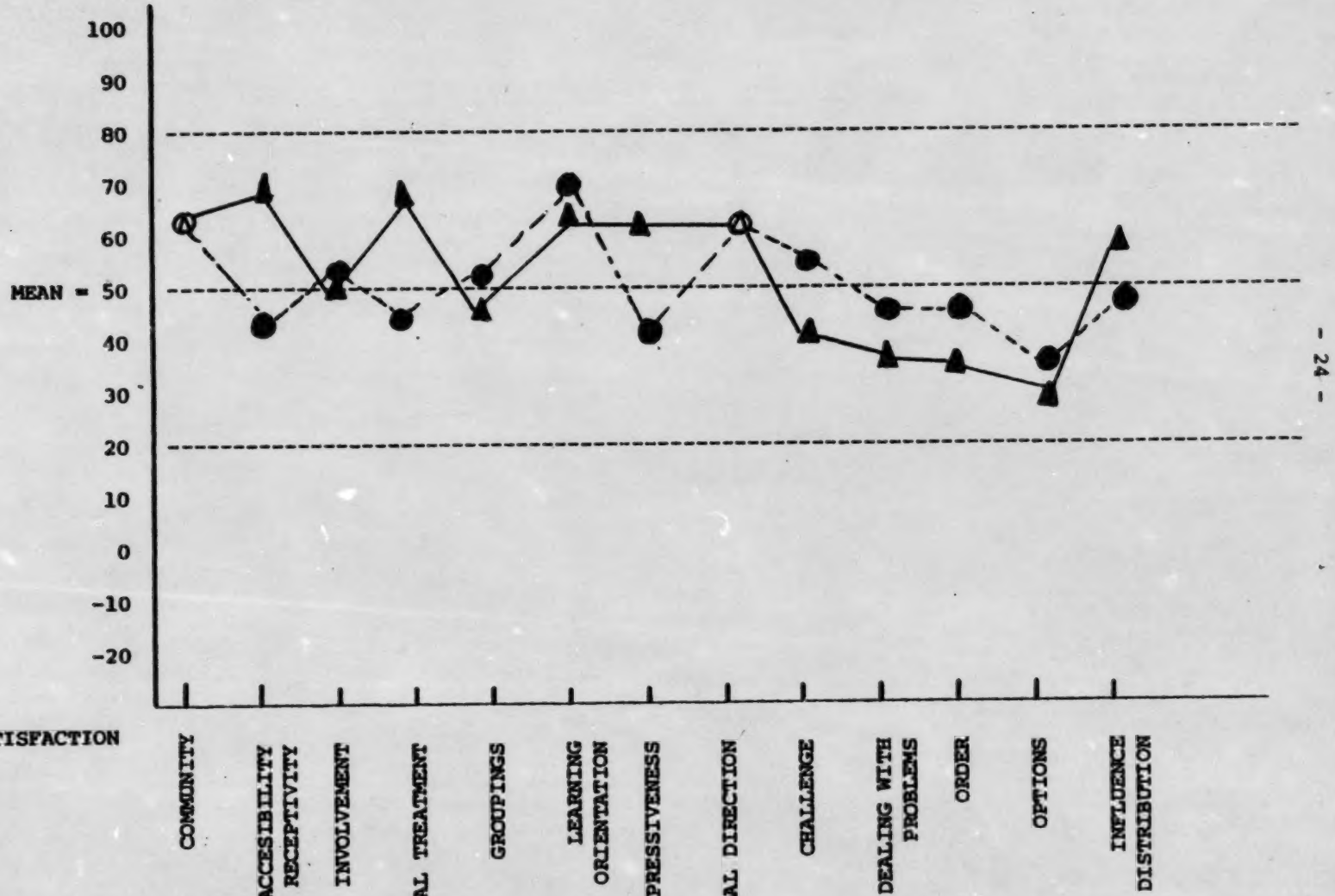
GRAPH III

School Climate: Student Climate

SCHOOL: SCHOOL C

KEY: Staff on Students (n=46)

Students on Students (n=397)



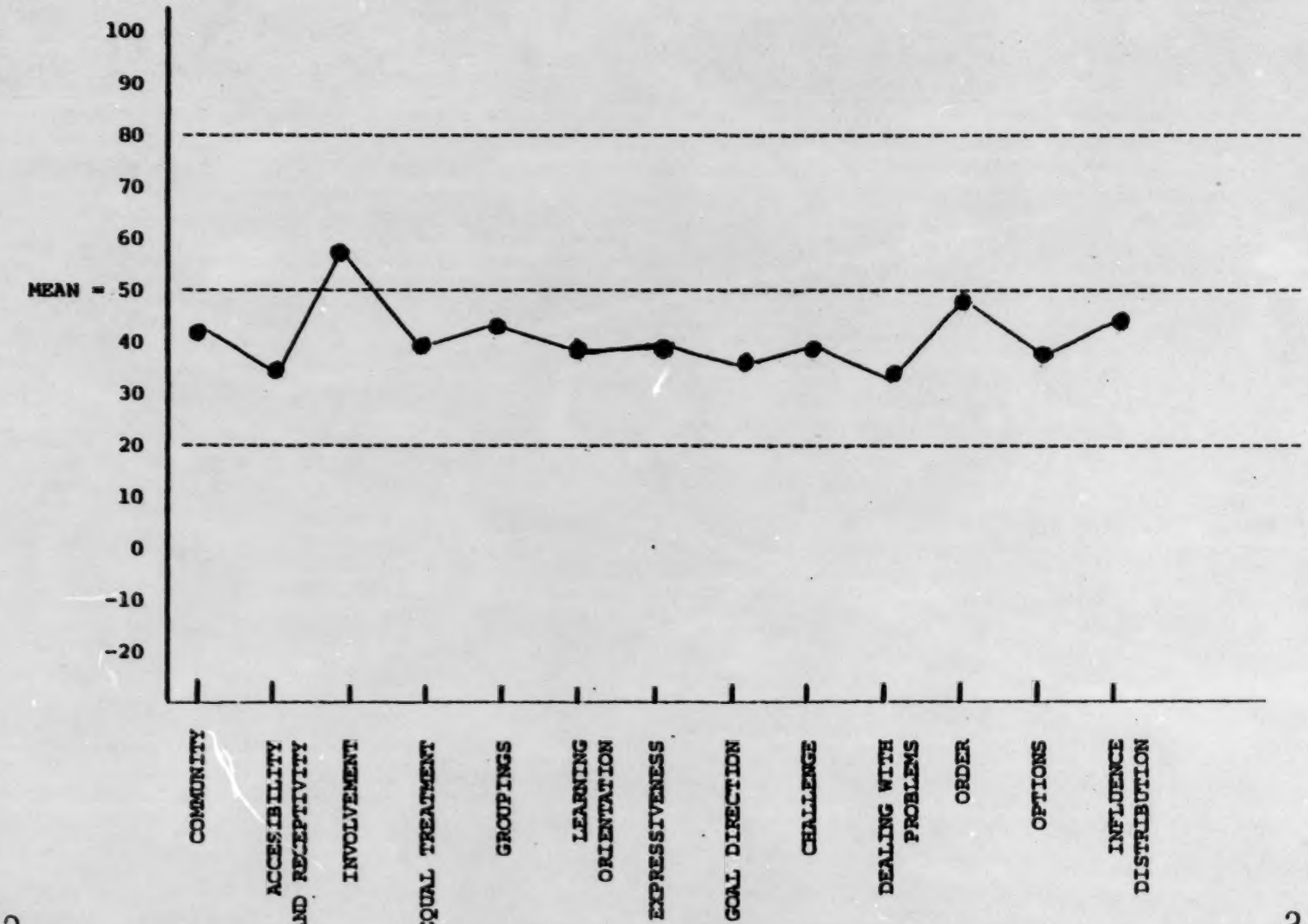
QUESTIONNAIRE PROFILE

GRAPH IV

School Climate: Staff on Staff Climate

SCHOOL: SCHOOL A

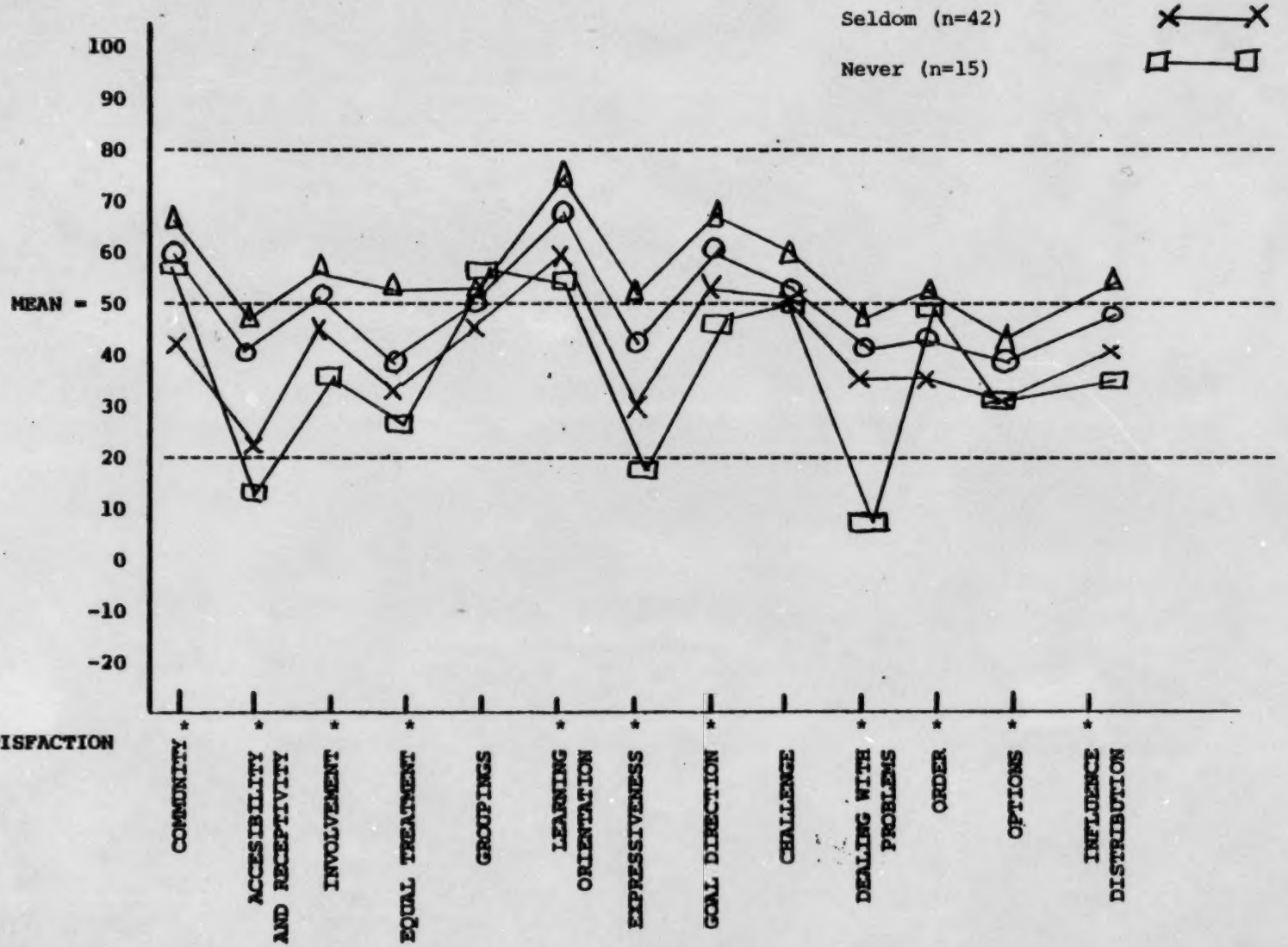
KEY: Staff Ratings (n=44)



School Climate: Students on Students by Family Attitude

SCHOOL: SCHOOL C (Total n=373)

KEY: All of the time (n=189)
Most of the time (n=127)
Seldom (n=42)
Never (n=15)

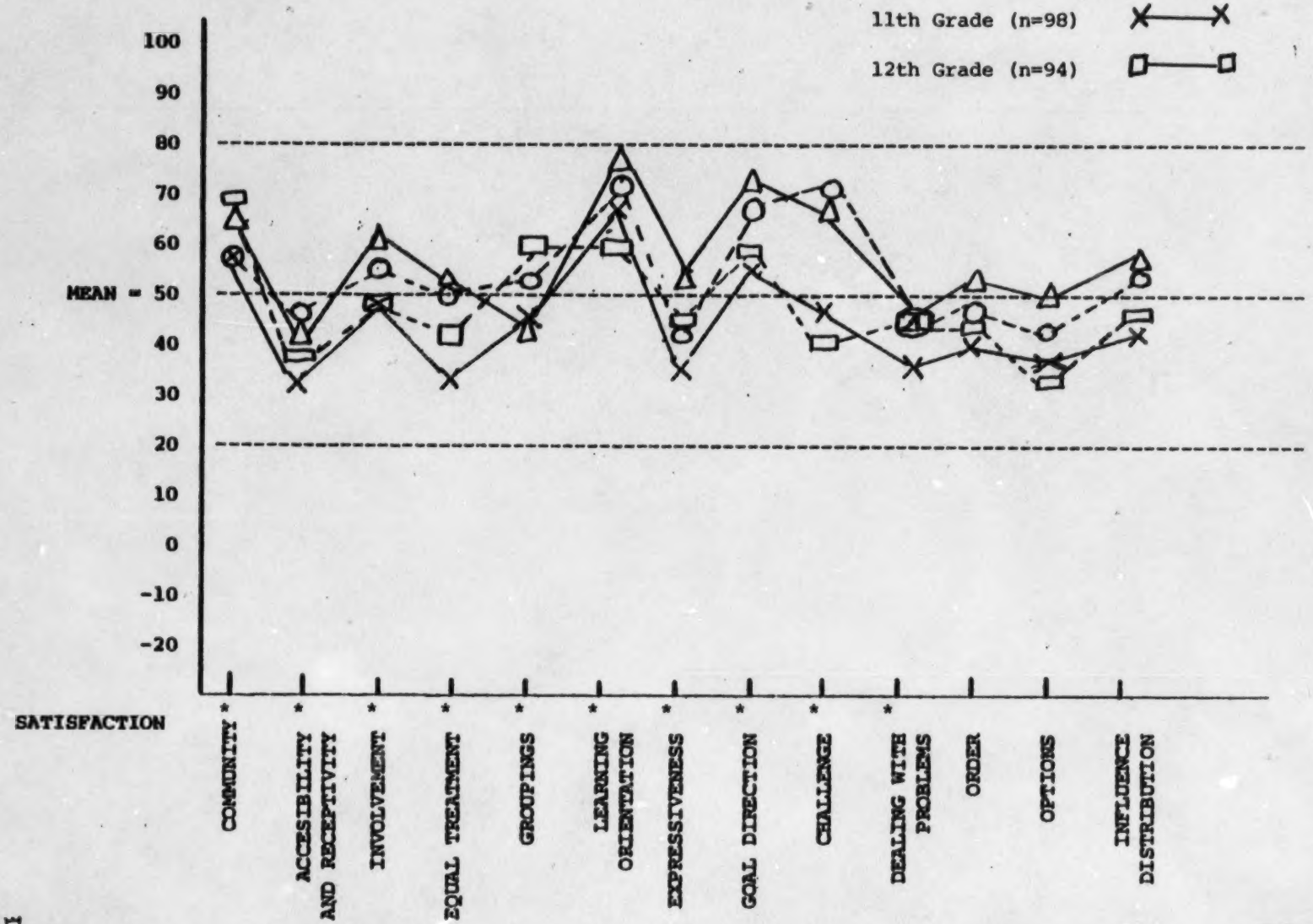


* = Statistical significance at .05 level or more.

School Climate: Students on Students by Grade Level

SCHOOL: SCHOOL C (Total n=388)

KEY: 9th Grade (n=100)
10th Grade (n=96)
11th Grade (n=98)
12th Grade (n=94)



* = Statistical significance at .05 level or more.

APPENDIX D

School A

SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(Students)

I. Expressiveness

A. Variable - Perception of the extent of originality and open expression of ideas and feelings among school members.

B. Ratings - The variable Expressiveness was rated very low in most cases by the students and the teachers. At the mean the variable was rated in the range of 40 down to 10, which makes it quite low. The only time the variable was rated close to the mean was by the "A" students when it was rated approximately 45.

C. Interpretation - The students in general will be less expressive because they feel that they have no security. Another reason for not expressing themselves is due to the peer pressure by their fellow students and friends.
The teachers rating this around the mean feel their students are being as expressive as the teachers expected.

D. Recommendations -
1. Try to encourage students to become more involved.
2. Add more extracurricular activities.
3. Suggest a later afternoon bus.
4. Suggest that Wednesday activity be changed from the first period to the last, cutting class time by five minutes.
5. Have a type of seminar during 5A or 5B study.
6. Straighten out the awkward situation in the library. (The problem is the closing of the library for study and the infrequency of its being open.)
7. Some new supplies in the library along with library aides are indicated.

II. Options

A. Variable - Perception of the extent of choices available to school members regarding goals, courses, levels of challenge and social opportunities.

B. Ratings - Both the teachers and the students rated this variable low. The variable was rated in the range of 30 down to 20, a factor which left it well under the mean of 50. The variable was at its highest point when the teachers rated it at approximately 35 on the staff profile. The students in the tenth grade rated the highest for this variable.
Other than these two exceptions the variable was usually right around 20, with one exception, when it dipped below 20 in the case of the profile of effect of home on school work. The people who felt it was poor rated option very low.

C. Interpretation - The students in all cases feel that there are not enough options at this school. This is shown by the poor ratings that this variable received.
Another point shown is that the teachers also feel that there is too little option for this system.

Although when the variable was rated the highest rating was by the tenth graders, this could be accomplished by the numbers of activities and/or fund raisers that take place.
This condition means that low variable reveals that the people are unhappy with the present class groupings, and with the number of school activities and clubs.

D. Recommendations

1. More shop related activities and field trips; also, a more concentrated effort made for these functions.
2. Individual scheduling.
3. The Mind Your Own Business course should be an elective.
4. Art and typing should be electives to all students.

ELEMENTS OF A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (Student Climate) School A

GOAL: (What)
1. Suggest later afternoon bus
2. Add more curricular activities
3. Individual scheduling

NEED: (Why)

PLAN SUMMARY: (How-General)

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (STEPS)	OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS/COSTS (How - Specific)	(Who-Rec.) TARGET GROUP	(Who-Imp.) PERSON/GROUP RESPONSIBLE	(When-T) TARGET COMPLE-TION DATE	(When-A) ACTUAL COMPLE-TION DATE
1. Expressive-ness	To change the time of activity period to last period of the day (period 1 transferred to period 7).	Director Dept. heads Rel. & Gen.	TDR School Cli-mate Committee	9/80	
2. Expressive-ness	To expand activity period to longer time, starting 25 minutes earlier, by using 5 minutes from each class.	Director Dept. heads Rel. & Gen.	TDR School Cli-mate Committee	1/81	
3. Expressive-ness	Transportation provided for extended activity period.	Director Dept. Heads Rel. & Gen.	TDR School Cli-mate Committee	1/81	
4. Options	Suggest a meeting with Director and Related and General Department Heads to discuss the procedures to follow in incorporating individualized scheduling.	Director Dept. Heads Rel. & Gen.	TDR School Cli-mate Committee	9/80	

School A

SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(Staff)

I. Accessibility and Receptivity

A. Variable - Accessibility and Receptivity - Perceptions of the availability and openness of school members to conversation and assistance about concerns.

B. Ratings -"Administration pays little attention to what teachers say here." This was reflected by a 3.22 rating under the Accessibility and Receptivity category. This 3.22 out of a total score of 4.00 indicates a positive response to this negative statement.
The statement, "The teachers and administration here rarely talk together" also evoked a high positive response to a negative statement receiving a 3.05 rating.

C. Interpretation - It would seem because of the ratings of the two above statements that improved communications between teachers and administrators are indicated. It is obvious that there must be more communication and that the quality of listening on the part of the administrators should be improved. The desire on the part of the administration to have clear lines of bi-lateral communications with the staff is without question. However, this desire to communicate is not imparted to the staff.

D. Recommendations -
1. At the beginning of each school year faculty members should receive a schedule of periodic faculty meetings for the school year.
Prior to faculty meetings, the agenda should be distributed to all staff.
Minutes of these meetings should be taken by clerical staff employed within the school and distributed to all staff within ten days of said meetings.
2. Mini-workshops should be held throughout the school year. Examples:
Use of Audio-Visual Equipment - Role/Duties of Class Advisors
3. Personal visits to shops and classrooms by administrators is strongly encouraged and desirable.

II. Equal Treatment

A. Variable - Equal treatment -Perceptions of the uniformity of school members' opportunities and treatment in the school.

B. Ratings -"You get ahead here by working hard"- 1.49;"teachers in this school who do an outstanding job are given recognition"- 1.65. Both of these positive statements were rated extremely low by the staff. This low rating indicates a very negative tone on the part of the staff.
The statement, "People in this school are labeled" was rated high (3.05), therefore indicating again a negative response on the part of the faculty.

C. Interpretation - These three ratings seem to indicate a feeling of hopelessness on the part of the staff. It could be interpreted that opportunities for recognition are lacking and sorely desired by the staff.

D. Recommendations -
   1. Letters of commendation should be placed in the files of instructors who perform in an outstanding manner in either curricular and/or extra-curricular activities.
   2. To promote better relationships between administrators and staff and between staff and staff, a vehicle for airing differences be established. This vehicle would promote open discussion of such differences and possible solutions. This vehicle might take the form of periodic social hours after school hours or more formal group discussions.

III. Dealing with Problems

A. Variables - Perceptions of the extent of identifying, analyzing and resolving school problems when they arise.

B. Ratings -"The same old problems are never solved in this school"- 3.22; and "decisions are left vague ...as to what they are and who will carry them out" - 3.11 - are two very negative statements which evoked very positive responses.

C. Interpretations - These findings indicate that the staff believes that a negative climate exists for dealing with certain school problems. Furthermore, once a problem is identified and a decision reached, the necessary follow-up is lacking and/or vague, thus causing staff frustration.

D. Recommendations -
   1. The establishment of a chain of command to include administrative responsibilities and responsibilities of ancillary staff (i.e., Administrative Service Officer).
   2. A more organized method for assisting new faculty in general be developed.
   3. The respective responsibilities of the Director and Assistant Director of the school be defined, thus providing direction to problems.
   4. A stress workshop be held for all staff, thereby providing an opportunity to learn methods of dealing with frustrations which cause stress.
   5. Encouragement of cooperative teaching between the shop faculty and the academic faculty be a priority of the administration. This should provide a more positive attitude within the school community.

GOAL: (What) To provide a program of orientation for new faculty members.

NEED: (Why) To ease adjustment problems, especially for anyone new to the Voc-Tech system.

PLAN SUMMARY: (How-General) Organized scheduled meetings for presentation.
Provide written reference material (handbook).

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (STEPS)	OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS/COSTS (How - Specific)	(Who-Rec.) TARGET GROUP	(Who-Imp.) PERSON/GROUP RESPONSIBLE	(When-T) TARGET COMPLE-TION DATE	(When-A) ACTUAL COMPLE-TION DATE

1. Teachers entering _____ are not instructed with respect to how curriculum is organized, exactly what materials are available and where they are located, the procedures for obtaining materials (Ditto masters, for example).

2. Procedures involved in grading, completing deficiencies (for what grades, etc.) what records should be kept in order to be able to calculate final averages.

3. Payroll procedures: Do we have a PL day? The fact that a paycheck is held back, the types of retirement plans available. Teachers who arrive after school opens often wait weeks for a check; some don't get paid for the summer. They aren't informed of this.

4. The fact that they are to spend two evenings in the school.

5. How to plan a field trip, complete end-of-the-year forms (especially inventory), what to do with a student who skips detention, how to count late arrivals/early dismissals when totaling homeroom attendance, etc., etc., etc.!

Suggestions:

1. Create a faculty handbook within each school. This may contain a school-year calendar, list of dates of faculty meetings, discipline procedures, grading procedures, faculty phone numbers, sample PL forms, pay schedule, etc.

2. On the day of meetings before school opens, hold a 1-2 hour meeting for new teachers, with department heads, Director, Guidance head, etc., to give presentation of policies, forms, what to expect, what to avoid, how scheduling is handled, etc.

3. Spell out all procedures so everyone handles things the same way. (Two different teachers run cafeteria duty two different ways; kids don't know the rules from one teacher to the next.)

IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL (STEPS)	OBJECTIVES/ACTIONS/COSTS (How - Specific)	(Who-Rec.) TARGET GROUP	(Who-Imp.) PERSON/GROUP RESPONSIBLE	(When-T) TARGET COMPLE-TION DATE	(When-A) ACTUAL COMPLE-TION DATE

4. Organize the program so that teachers arriving mid-year also receive orientation. (They are more likely to be forgotten than any new teacher.)

5. Cancel state-wide orientation, or at least reduce it to one day; it certainly isn't worthy of two days. A new teacher is more interested in how to deal with a particular problem in his/her building than he/she is in what a particular consultant looks like. One welcome speech is sufficient.

SCHOOL B

COMMITTEE REPORT ON 1979-1980 CLIMATE PROJECT

At its initial meeting, the team was familiarized with the project, its background, scope and purpose, and the team's responsibilities. An action plan was established to: (1) survey the school population through use of a questionnaire; (2) analyze the results of the questionnaire; and (3) recommend actions based on findings. The School Climate Questionnaire was discussed. The questionnaire consisted of 91 opinion statements concerned with the school environment. Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a scale ranging from "1" - strongly disagree, to "4" - strongly agree. Additional statements were added which served to identify the respondents with various groups (i.e., race, sex, grade in school, trade area, etc.). Questionnaires were administered to the following groups of students (randomly selected within grade levels):

76 9th grade students
79 10th grade students
74 11th grade students
81 12th grade students

In addition, 63 professional staff members each completed two questionnaires, the first exactly the same as the student questionnaire and the second relating to opinions and feelings on school climate for staff.

Completed surveys were forwarded to TDR Associates in Boston for scoring and compilation of data.

At its second workshop meeting, the committee reviewed the data resulting from the survey and reviewed the definitions of the school domains and variables for which the data was reported.

The committee was presented a number of graphic representations of the data obtained from the survey. It was observed that there were two types of data when comparing student and staff responses which might be of concern to the committee and

which would form the basis of the committee report. These are (1) those situations where both students and staff rated a variable at a very low level; examples are Community, Dealing With Problems, and Options; and (2) those situations where a substantial difference in rating levels exists between staff and student ratings; examples are Accessibility and Receptivity, Expressiveness, and Challenge.

The committee decided to focus on two variables at this time, noting that it would be possible to utilize the information developed on the other variables at some future date.

Selected for in-depth analysis were the two variables dealing with "relationships," one of each of the types indicated above. Those variables selected were Community and Accessibility and Receptivity.

The remainder of this report consists of:

1. Analysis of the two variables mentioned above
2. Recommendations re: actions to be taken to resolve identified problems
3. Recommendations re: additional use of data generated by the survey

COMMUNITY: Perceptions of the level of friendship and mutual support school members feel toward each other.

Ratings: Both staff and students rated this variable low. The students rated only four of the remaining twelve variables at a lower level. Staff rated only three variables lower.

Ninth grade students rated this variable higher than did other students. The higher the grade level, the lower was the tendency to rate Community.

Male students tended to rate this variable lower than did females. Also, non-whites rated it significantly lower than did whites.

A difference in rating is evident on the basis of grades and student aspirations. Students receiving A's and B's and those students aspiring to college rated this variable higher than did others.

The rating levels also seemed to be a function of students' satisfaction with school. Students who like school rated it highest. The rating level dropped as dislike for school increased. Lowest ratings were obtained from those students who admitted to the greatest amount of truancy.

Interpretations: The ratings tend to confirm what has been a long standing problem in Vocational-Technical schools, and other regional schools, for some time. Students may tend to have difficulty in identifying with a school community which is oftentimes removed from their resident community. Many towns are represented in the _____ student population. Most of the students must reach school by bus (many times commuting large distrances). This may prevent them from participating in any school life that occurs outside of classroom hours. This would contribute to the sense of lack in identifying with a 'community'. Even within the school day, separation by shops for a good portion of the time a student spends in school would tend to lessen the opportunity for greater contacts with other students.

Differences in ratings by students by grade level may be due to the fact that a large portion of the upper class students are employed in jobs after school hours, again preventing full participation in extra-curricula activities.

Non-white students, already a relatively small minority of the student population, may find their division over 13 shops further complicating their lack of identity with a group.

Student members of the committee indicated that there was a serious lack of confidence in the effectiveness of student organizations. A need for more decision-making responsibilities and involvement in student activities by more students was indicated.

Concern was also expressed about the limited faculty involvement in student activities and lack of publicity accorded student events, both within the school and through local news media.

Recommendations

There appears to be a need to promote activity within the school which would provide students with greater opportunities to become involved in decision making activities. At the same time, a need to develop school pride seems evident. The following recommendations seek to begin the process.

1. Establish an ongoing student-faculty publicity committee with the responsibility of publicizing school functions and student achievements.

2. A joint committee of students and faculty review the present student activities program. This committee should explore ways in which the daily schedule can be altered to allow greater activity during the time students are in school.

3. Student council meetings should be scheduled at regular intervals. Time should be provided for student council representatives to report to homerooms and receive suggestions from students.

4. Faculty should be encouraged to attend student functions (including athletic contests). Faculty should also be familiarized with the role of student council.

5. The student council should survey the student body to determine their interests and desires in the development of extracurricula programs.

6. A student-faculty assembly committee be established to plan programs that are culturally enriching and/or entertaining.

ACCESSIBILITY & RECEPTIVITY: Perceptions of the availability and openness of school members to conversation and assistance about concerns.

Ratings: It is evident that the students and faculty are divided in their perceptions of accessibility and receptivity. It is rated among the five lowest variables by students and among the four highest by the staff.

Student responses varied among different groups of students. Upper class students rated it much lower than did lower class students. Males rated this variable significantly lower than did females. As in many cases (with most variables) students who were doing well in both shop and general education classes, tended to like rather than dislike school, and who were less likely to be truant were more positive in their ratings. Those students who were doing poorly, tended to dislike school, and had admittedly been frequently truant rated this variable very low.

Of particular interest was the rating of this variable at a very low level by those students who were looking to full-time employment at the conclusion of their secondary school program. Students planning to go on to college rated this lower than did students who spent most of their free time in home activities.

Interpretations: It may be that faculty view their availability to students in terms of their work day (7:45-3:00) while students would prefer to have greater access to faculty during the school day (8:00-2:30). Students are quick to point out that buses do not arrive until 8:00 in the morning and leave promptly at 2:30 in the afternoon. This leaves little time for them to meet with faculty before and after the school day. Many students (especially upper class students) are employed in part-time jobs which begin immediately after school, again making them unavailable.

Teacher preparation time often conflicts with other classes that students must attend. This complicates attempts to find meeting time.

A review of specific items included in this variable indicates that students feel ignored by staff. They seem to perceive a lack of interest in their problems and concerns. Students were in strong agreement with such statements as, "People pay

little attention to what students say around here," and "People here make you feel that you're wasting time when you ask for help." This would suggest a serious lack of communication in the area of student concerns. The important point to remember is that the students perceive this to be the case, whether or not it is indeed fact.

Recommendations:

1. Teachers should consider setting aside a small portion of each class period, or a larger portion of one period per week when activities assigned to the class will allow the teacher to deal with individuals who may be experiencing difficulties.

2. Teachers should post times when they are available to meet with students.

3. Make-up requirements (school policy and individual teacher policy) should be distributed to students, in writing, to avoid misunderstandings.

4. Members of the school administration should meet with representative students at regular intervals to obtain student concerns.

5. Group guidance sessions should be instituted to allow for student expression of concerns.

6. A committee of students and faculty should be established to discuss and propose positive steps to improve student-faculty relations.

Recommendations re: further use of survey data:

An enormous amount of data was generated by the survey administered to both students and faculty. This report deals with only a small portion of the data. The staff climate information is not dealt with at all. Several recommendations are now presented which would utilize the data and address a number of issues not dealt with here.

1. A faculty committee be organized which would analyze the data on staff climate and make recommendations as needed.

2. An opportunity be provided (in the fall of 1980) for students, staff, and parents to review the data and discuss the possibility of additional recommendations.

3. Small committees be established to deal with other variables not covered in this report.

4. Consideration be given to another survey to explore in greater detail some of the issues raised by the data.

School C

SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

(Student and Staff)

Variables selected: Student Climate
Accessibility and Receptivity
Equal Treatment
Order

Staff Climate
Order

Recommended: Assign one team member to write up ratings and interpretations for each variable from team discussions. Enlarge the team and continue with steps toward developing plans for open hearings to be held in the fall.